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OTHER HANDS

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SECOND AGE EDAIN

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Bridget Buxton
Michael Martinez
Brian McNeilly

EDITING

Chris Seeman

Charles Watteyne

PAGEMAKING

Quentin Westcott

ARTWORK

Bridget Buxton

Quentin Westcott
Patrick Wynne

NEXT ISSUE

BALROGS!

Editorial:

Survey Says ...

Imagine that...an OH issue that arrived on time for once! Yes, we are hard at work getting ahead of schedule, in fact, so that there will be no time lag for future issues either.

You may remember from last issue that I had undertaken a questionnaire to find out more about you all and what you wanted most to see in OH. Well, the response to the survey was far-reaching (c. 70% of the total subscribers) and, as promised, I lay before you now the results. Kudos to all who participated! Not only were your responses enjoyable to read but they were also extremely valuable in formulating a clear picture of where your interests lie. Now Iwill be able to make editorial decisions with a good deal more confidence.

Let's begin with a portrait of OH's readership. OH currently has 66 paying subscribers. Gratis copies are also sent to ICE, Tolkien Enterprises and (most recently) Mithril miniatures.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

39 - USA [+ ICE, TE]

6 - UK [+ Mithril]

3 — Canada, Germany

2 — Brasil, Sweden, New Zealand

1 — Austria, Bermuda, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Norway, Serbia, Spain, Uruguay

The statistics that follow are based upon the 46 responses to the survey that were received as of 4/8/98. Note that not all of the numbers strictly "add up" to 46, since some of the questions may simultaneously place a respondent in more than one category.

COMPOSITION

This section indicates the respondent's primary connection to Middle-earth gaming.

Role players: 39 [Active (29); Inactive (10)]

GMs: 29; **Players:** 13.

General gamers: 3 [CCG (1); Computer (1); War/Miniatures (1)]

Non-gamers: 3 [Collectors (2); Scholar (1); Artistic (1)]

RPG DETAILS

Mode of Play: Indoor (32); Live-action (1); Mail (2).

Overlapping Interests: Computer Games (22); CCGs (15); Wargames/ Miniatures (17); Tolkien Scholarship (7); Boardgames (3).

Frequency of Play: a few times/year (9); lx/month (8); lx/week (7); 2x/ month(4); 3x/month (1); 2x/week (2).

Rule System: MERP (17); RM (16); Hybrid (3); RuneQuest (2); Harnmaster (2); D&D (2); Fantasy Hero (1); Diceless (1).

Temporal Setting: 3rd Age (25) [1640s (14); 1409-1447 (3); Kin-strife era (3); 2500 (1); 2942-3017 (1)]; 4th Age (4); 2nd Age (3); 1st Age (2); 5th Age (1).

FEATURE RATINGS

Respondents to the survey were asked to rate the kinds of things that have been published in OH to date on a scale of 1-5 (1 = get rid of this!; 2 = wouldn't be sorry to see this go; 3 = doesn't matter either way; 4 = 1 really like this; 5 = don't you dare get rid of this!). In the interests of economizing on space, I decided to use the tabulated results of these ratings as a democratic means of determining which features (if any) needed to be discontinued in order to make more room for things people find more valuable.

I briefly analyze the results below in order of diminishing popularity. The numbers appearing in the 1-5 rating columns indicate the number of subscribers who selected that particular rating:

FEATURE	1	2	3	4	5	AVERAGE
Essays	—	—	1	11	34	4.7
Adventures	—	—	12	12	22	4.1
Editorial	—	1	6	22	17	4.1
Communications	—	1	8	24	13	4.1
Frontlines	—	2	12	14	18	4.0
Rule Ideas	—	4	15	14	13	3.8
Reviews	1	2	10	27	6	3.7
Interviews	—	6	13	19	8	3.6
Fiction	4	3	17	12	10	3.4
NPC Stats	3	4	19	15	5	3.3
Digital Hands	1	11	25	7	2	2.9
MECCG	11	9	16	8	2	2.5

- **Essays:** Background essays on various facets of Middle-earth clearly take the prize as OH's best-loved feature. I'll try to arrange it so that there is at least one in each issue.
- **Adventures:** It doesn't surprise me that this category takes second place. After all, adventures are the essence of role playing. I have always considered the ideal issue to be one that balances the practical with the theoretical, and publishing adventures seems to be your preferred method for achieving this. As with the essays, I will strive to keep these in the forefront as much as possible.
- **Editorial:** Awe, shucks. Thanks folks. Seriously, though, I too believe it is important to carry on some kind of running commentary or dialogue with each issue, to put OH in perspective with what's going on in the wider gaming world. Nuff said.
- **Communications:** This is not exactly a regular feature of OH, since it is contingent upon subscribers actually writing letters. But like the editorial, it also serves to maintain continuity between issues as well as sustaining our international community (or the illusion thereof!).
- **Frontlines:** I suppose this is sort of my own contribution to the Communications enterprise. Seeing as how less will be going on in the near future with MERP, however, I can perhaps compress any news into my editorial space.
- **Rule Ideas:** Now we begin to dip into the border region between ratings 3 and 4. Though practically oriented, maybe game mechanics are not as crucial to some of us as getting new adventures to run (or maybe we've just had it up to here with articles on how to handle magic in Middle-earth!).
- **Reviews:** Oh well, there won't be as frequent a need for these as in the past anyway. Might as well free up some page space.
- **Interviews:** I personally enjoy doing these, as it is yet another way of bringing the far-flung corners of Middle-earth gamedom (in all its aspects) a little closer; but as they don't happen that often, they needn't be too intrusive.
- **Fiction:** We start to move downhill from here (though the number of subscribers who want to see this sort of thing still outnumber the dissenters). My original conception of the function of game-based fiction for OH (apart from its mere entertainment value) was that it provides one avenue for presenting adventure ideas that other GMs might find fruitful. However, in view of the mixed response to it indicated by the survey, I offer the following concessions: 1) any given fiction contribution should be limited in length (say, 2-3 pages tops), and 2) it should have a definite ending point, so that it will not monopolize space as a regular feature of OH (so Rastarin's Log will be brought to a conclusion within a couple more issues).
- **NPC Stats:** On the margins of acceptability (but still in the positive). Perhaps the practical value of such contributions would be advanced if they were attached to a larger essay or adventure piece.
- **Digital Hands:** Here is the first casualty of our survey. A curious outcome, given the apparently widespread interest among OH subscribers in computer gaming. My suspicion is that many subscribers do see much that is of value in Fredrik's longstanding contribution to this journal, but perhaps devoting a regular column to a topic that is in some respects peripheral to the core concern of OH is too much as our page space shrinks. Fredrik will continue to keep us appraised of any significant developments in his area of interest which may find their way into the "Frontlines" section of the editorial pages.
- **MECCG:** Here again, while many of us (myself included) enjoy collecting cards, OH may simply not be the right place to deal with them as such.

OK. So much for the survey. (Actually, there are several additional comments from survey participants I would like to respond to, but that will have to wait till next issue.) Onto this issue and other news of the hour.

If the survey was any indication, we should have another winning combination this issue. We begin with a warm welcome back to Middle-earth scholar extrordinaire Michael Martinez. This time round he has decided to tackle a speculative topic: where would the Edain of the Second Age have lived? No idle question for the GM running a campaign in that period.

Next, first-time contributor Brian McNeilly gives us a ready-to-run scenario set in T.A. 1640 Eriador. More fuel for the Angmar-Arthedain border wars!

Finally, Bridget Buxton returns with more tongue & cheek narrative as the infamous piratess of Belfalas Bay, dedicated to disturbing polite Gondorian society. Incidentally, some of you may have observed that the previous two installments of Rastarin's Log have pretty much followed the plot of "The Lost Elendilmir" (the mini-campaign that appeared in SG:TL). In the present episode, the story begins to drift into new territory, involving as it does some of the formative components of the Paths of the Dead revision module we were working on when the moratorium hit.

This brings me to my first bit of news: my plans to publish part of that manuscript under the title The Oathbreakers have begun to make real progress.

A recent MERP auction I held on the Internet, abetted by very generous additional donations by OH subscribers Doug Pearson and Eric Dubourg, has harvested sufficient funds to begin production on this piece. A late summer release is looking like a very strong possibility. (More on this later.)

Second bit of news: OH is getting a new and improved website (hopefully within another month or so). In addition to the bare subscription info and list of back is-

sues, this page will also contain much valuable reference material that can be downloaded for free, including a complete MERP bibliography (compiled and updated from the last twenty issues of OH and other sources) and additional indices for use with Hands of the Healer (prepared by Jason Vester and myself). I hope to add still more things as time and opportunity allow.

Before I sign off, I want to notice an error made in last issue's editorial, where Jasna Martinovic was referred to as "he." Mea culpa, Jasna is a she! Hey, the more women GMs out there, the better off we will all be. Cheers!

Chris Seeman
April 22, 1998

FRONTLINES

Middle-earth Role Playing

- **The Dwarven Company** (Sept '98): ICE has decided to reverse the order of publication for its first two MERP adventure kits. The Dwarven Company is set in T. A. 2644. It centers on a band of Durin's folk that seeks to reclaim the Dwarf-holds of the Grey Mountains from Orcs and dragons. It will include an entirely new color map of the region.
- **Fornost is Burning!** (Dec '98): Set in T. A. 1974, the year of Arthedain's fall to the Witch-king, the goal of characters in this adventure is to make it out of Eriador alive, salvaging what can be salvaged of the remnants of the North-kingdom.

Middle-earth Collectible Card Game

- **Challenge Decks** (now available): A series of 10 pre-tuned, grey border MECCG decks of 110 cards each (5 oriented towards playing one of the Nazgûl, 5 towards the Wizards), designed for casual play, teaching someone else how to play, or tournament play without having to go through the trouble to set up a deck. Each deck comes with boiled-down rules, sites and a side board.
- **A Long-Expected Party** (now available): 16 sites and 4 scenarios. Includes site gazetteer and 21" x 16 " color map of Eriador (blow-up of standard MECCG Joe Hartvig map).
- **Mordor's Black** Gate (May '98): another 16 site/4 scenario supplement, this time focused on Mordor.
- **Expansion Sets:** The White Hand (now available); The Balrog (May '98): ; The Dwarves (Aug '98); The Elves (Nov '98).

Other Middle-earth Products

- **Lord of the Rings Adventure Game:** Work continues on Before the Goblins and Greatest of the Forests. Late summer release dates projected.
- **Elrond's House** (Fall '98).
- **Middle-earth Battle** System (Fall '98): A complete wargaming system; will include 28mm miniatures.
- **The Hobbit Adventure Boardgame** (Fall '98): 2nd edition; revised and expanded.
- **Races & Cultures:** Middle-earth (no release date set): Provides rules for developing Middle-earth characters within the RMSS system. The author, OH subscriber Joe Mandala, hopes to get the manuscript to ICE by June '98.
- **Orcs and Trolls** (no release date set): A non-collectible card game where you play rampaging baddies trying to stay one step ahead of the game.

COMMUNICATIONS

Nancy Martsch:

I'm sorry to hear that ICE is cutting down on the MERP line, but not surprised. This very much parallels what happened with simulation boardgames twenty years ago. Boardgames started out simulating battles and what-not, with a simple hexagon map and die-cut cardboard counters. They grew more and more complicated, until you got monster games like War in the East, the entire Russo-German front of WW II: sixty pages of rules, a thousand counters, maps covering two tables, taking half a dozen gamers three days to play, and sold for the then astronomical price of $40.00.

Well, novice gamers simply couldn't play these games. The market shrank.

Then along came D&D. It was simple and fun to play and appealed to a new generation of gamers (young people and fantasy fans and women). RPGs took off; boardgames foundered. They continue to be published, but will never again dominate the market.

Now RPGs have followed the same pattern, becoming more and more complicated and expensive and appealing to a shrinking market, until you get "monster modules" like Southern Gondor and Arnor. Novice gamers cannot get into these games. There is competition between computer games (themselves becoming more complicated), and along comes Magic: The Gathering, a CCG which is simple and fun to play and appeals to a new generation of young gamers. Is it surprising that RPGs are beginning to founder?

I don't know what direction gaming will take in the future. Perhaps ICE will continue to market CCGs. MERP is still big in Europe (they are several years behind us), something to remember. Maybe Middle-earth gaming can be translated to the computer — or the Internet — but no one type of game dominates the market forever.

ADVENTURING AMONG SECOND AGE EDAINIC PEOPLES

Michael Martinez: 429 Robin Meadows, Albuquerque, NM 87114, USA
(michaelm@swcp.com)

Since Middle-earth Role Playing *is set in the Third Age, the venues may become a bit too familiar to your players after a few years. One option to consider for keeping the gaming world fresh, in addition to acquiring the new modules as they come out, is to look to the past and to the mysterious lost civilization of the Edainic peopled of Rhovanion and neighboring lands. Whether you set an adventure in the Second Age, or dredge up dome terror from the past, exploring the seldom seen world of the Edain of the Second Age may be a refreshing break for your players.*

SOURCES

J.R.R. Tolkien provided us with little information about the Men of the Vales of Anduin in *The Lord of the Rings* itself. And Christopher Tolkien hardly told us more when he published *The Silmarillion.* We learn of Dale and Esgaroth, and of Beorn in *The Hobbit,* but there is so little said of these peoples who appear in the hobbit's adventures and then vanish almost without a trace.

Unfinished Tales changed the picture we had of the Edain dramatically. In the chapter concerning the history of Galadriel and Celeborn we finally learned that many of the Edainic peoples had remained in Eriador, but that some were also living in the Vales of Anduin in the eaves of Greenwood the Great. Most of the material pertaining to these peoples is to be found interwoven with that concerning the Elves, or with that concerning their descendants, the Northmen of the Third Age.

When *The Peoples of Middle-earth,* last volume in the "History of Middle-earth" series, was finally published, we learned at last what the connection was between the Edain who settled in Beleriand and the tribes of the East who became the Northmen of the Third Age. A vast history unfolds in a few brief pages—too few, really, to provide more than a gaming module — but it's a starting point.

Briefly, we learn in *The Peoples of Middle-earth* that the Edain migrated west along both the northern and southern shores of the inland sea of Rhûn. The Bëorians and Marachians appear to have been a united people at one time, but they divided early in the First Age and the Bëorians settled for a time in the hills on the southeastern shores of the sea. The Marachians, the greater part of the folk, settled in the forested lands on the northern shores of the sea.

The Marachians learned to build boats and soon re-established contact with the Bëorians. Yet, being troubled by Morgoth's servants, they passed onward. Some of the Edain moved north up the Celduin and Carnen rivers, and passing west along the Dwarf-road entered Greenwood. Eventually the Edain reached Eriador, where they made contact with the Gwathuirim, from whom came the Haladin of Beleriand.

The Edain of Eriador, according to Tolkien, were "mainly, it would seem, in origin kin of the Folk of Bëor, though some were kin of the Folk of Hador." They lived along the shores of Lake Evendim, in the North Downs, in the Weather Hills, and between the Weather Hills and Baranduin. But the greater part of the Edainic peoples seem to have stayed east of the mountains.

According to a note, the "Men of the North [east of the Hithaeglir] dwelt in all the adjacent lands as far south as the Great Dwarf Road that cut through the Forest" before the Barad-dûr was built and before the Númenóreans had returned to Middle-earth. They were settled along the rivers Anduin, Celduin and Carnen, and on the shores of the Inland Sea. They established trade with the Dwarves of Durin's folk, who lived throughout the Misty Mountains and the Grey Mountains, claiming all the mountain and hill-lands eastward to the Iron Hills.

WHERE THE EDAIN LIVED

The Edain of Rhovanion, Greenwood and the Vales of Anduin lived in friendship and alliance with the Dwarves for more than 1,800 years — probably more than 2,000 years all told — from the time of their arrival until the War of the Elves and Sauron.

The Peoples of Middle-earth states that "the Men with whom [the Dwarves] were [allied] -were for the most part akin in race and language with the tall and mostly fair-haired people of the 'House of Hador'," the Marachians. However, since the Beornings and the Woodmen of The Hobbit appear to be like the Bëorians in some respects, it seems plausible to suggest that Bëorian communities existed in the Vales of Anduin and probably the southernmost lands. Also, Tolkien states that the Hobbits who entered Eriador in the Third Age spoke a language "adopted from the Men of the Vales of Anduin (related to the Atani, in particular to those of the House of Bëor [>of the Houses of Hador and Bëor])...."

Although Tolkien does not tell us where the communities of the Edain were, we can populate Middle-earth of the early Second Age with some significant towns based on trade routes, rivers, and probable population centers. The names provided here are suitable for geographical references.

These would be the principal towns of the Edain in the early Second Age, not necessarily the only towns, and they should figure prominently in a gaming scenario. Other communities, scattered across the landscape, would be small farming and ranching villages, perhaps allied with the larger towns, perhaps not.

THE TOWNS OF ANDUIN

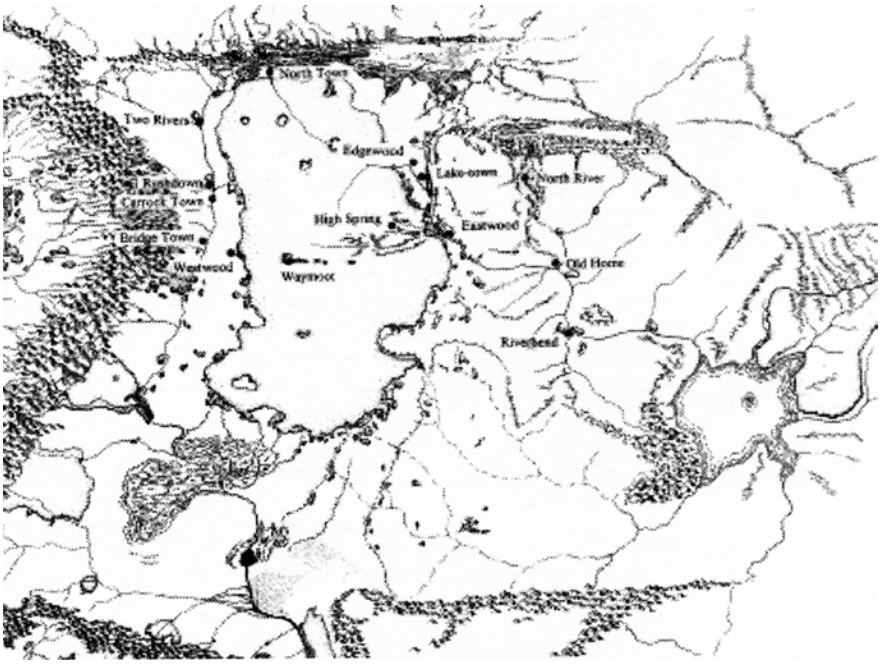
- **Bridge Town:** The Edain were friendly with the Silvan Elves from an early period, and so there would have been communities of Men close to the Elven realms of Amdír and Oropher. The Elves lived along Anduin on either side from the Gladden river southward to the Celebrant. The Edain would have settled north of the Gladden, probably founding a town at the ancient bridge the Dwarves had built across Anduin. We are told in The Hobbit that Woodmen had spread up the eastern valleys of the Misty Mountains toward the High Pass, so it seems probable there were villages scattered throughout the lands between the mountains and the river. The people of Bridge Town would probably be Marachians and Bëorians.
- **Carrock Town:** Another probable location for a large, central community would have been the Carrock, which seemed a natural ford in the late Third Age and the product of some skill in ancient times. Let us suppose, therefore, that an Edainic chieftain had established control over the region with its heart at the Carrock. These would be Marachians.
- **Rushdown:** North of Carrock Town, another logical position for a town would be the confluence of the Rushdown river and Anduin. These people would be primarily Marachians.
- **Two Rivers:** And north of Rushdown, the confluence of the Langwell and Greylin would provide a logical position for yet another Edainic chieftain. These people would also be primarily Marachians.

THE TOWNS OF GREENWOOD

- **Eastwood:** This would probably be a large town, being drawn from Marachian clans and placed along the Celduin. It would thrive on trade along Celduin and serve as a major crossroads for eastern Greenwood where the Men-i-Naugrim touched the river.
- **Edge-wood:** From Lake-town up the river Men could build a town near the forest's edge. Greenwood actually extended farther east in the Second Age than it did at the end of the Third Age, so Edgewood should be placed roughly where the Long Marshes begin. From there a road could be cut north through the forest to the Grey Mountains.
- **High Spring:** The Mountains of Mirkwood may have been a home for Dwarves, and there is a small river running from the east end of the mountains to Celduin. It would make sense for some hardy souls to establish a trading post at the source of the river. These would be Marachians but the town should be small.
- **Lake-town:** The forest north of the mountains may have been forbidding. There is no real economic reason for Men to settle in the deeper woods, but the Forest River would provide an ideal road for the Marachians to follow northward. Let us suppose they established a town upon the Long Lake. Though we call this Lake-town, it should not necessarily be confused with the Lake- town of *The Hobbit*.
- **North Town:** Another town could have been built at the far northern end of the Forest River. The Men of this region would be almost exclusively Marachians, trading with the Dwarves and raising horses in lowlands between the mountains and the forest.
- **Waymoot:** A town near the center of the Dwarf-road would make sense. It could benefit from trade with the Elves who lived to the south and with Men who lived to the north, as well as from trade with the Dwarves and the Men of east and west. Such a town would probably have both Bëorian and Marachian clans, but may well have been ruled by a Marachian chieftain.
- **Westwood:** Probably settled by Bëorians and Marachians. This town would be located at the western end of the Men-i-Naugrim, living off trade between the forest communities and the river towns.

THE EASTERN TOWNS

- **North River:** East of the Long Lake the Marachians would have followed the Carnen northward to the Iron Hills, where the Dwarves had mines from ancient times. A town built close to the hills, along the Carnen's banks, would have benefited from trade with the Dwarves and traffic on the river.
- **Old Home:** Southward, where the Celduin and Carnen join, another Marachian outpost would be established. It would be an important center of trade and news, having contact with the northern towns, the forest towns, and the tribes living in the plains to the west of Celduin.



- **Riverbend:** There would be good reason for the Marachians to establish a town at the point where Celduin turned east on its path toward Rhun.

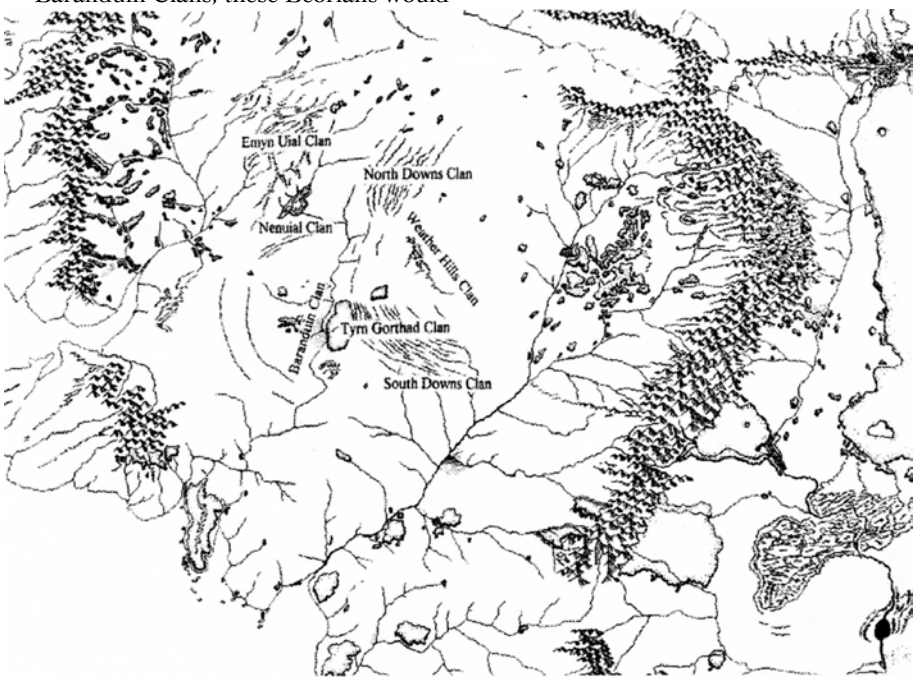
THE TRIBES OF ERIADOR

Except for the Bëorians of Estolad and Dorthonion, who were tutored by the Sindar and Noldor, the First House of the Edain seems to be portrayed as more primitive than the Marachians. Hence, it is perhaps more appropriate to speak of "tribes" than towns in Eriador, whose Edainic population was primarily drawn from the Bëorians.

In the First Age, clans unrelated to the Edain passed north and settled in the lands beyond the North Downs and the Hills of Evendim. Some passed around the Ered Luin in the north and entered Beleriand. These were the Folk of Bór and the Folk of Ulfang, followed by other clans who served Morgoth. But there were some who stayed in Eriador, apparently friendly with the Dwarves, Elves, and Edain. Tolkien indicates these became the northernmost Men of Eriador after the First Age.

The Bëorians appear to have lived in the South Downs and Tyrn Gorthad in some periods, so we may describe six possible tribes or clans:

- **Emyn Uial Clan:** These would be the northernmost group, and the westernmost as well. They would live in the Hills of Evendim, overlooking Lake Evendim and perhaps along the river which runs down from the hills to the Lhûn. They would probably be hunters and herdsmen. With the Nenuial and Baranduin Clans, these Bëorians would probably be the closest in friendship to the Eldar of Lindon. They probably also had contact with the Dwarves of Ered Luin and the northern clans related to the Folk of Bëor.
- **Nenuial Clan:** These would be fisherfolk, using boats on the lake and Baranduin, perhaps. And probably also farmers. They would benefit from trade with the Dwarves and Elves, and certainly with the Baranduin Clan. It might be that these Bëorians would also have contact with the northern clans related to the Folk of Bór.
- **Baranduin Clan:** Like the Nenuial Bëorians, these Edain would be riverfolk, fishermen and farmers, perhaps also hunters. They might actually have a town along the Dwarf-road which would later become the Númenórean Great Road. These Men are most likely to have visited the Elvish domains beyond Lindon, and to have learned or retained a knowledge of Sindarin. Perhaps these Edain absorbed or were descended from the Marachians and Beorians who fled Beleriand in the First Age.
- **Tyrn Gorthad Clan:** Probably shepherds and farmers. Living close to the Old Forest and the great forested lands of Minhiriath, they would perhaps also be a woodland folk — or at least some of their families might be. Rather than small farms, gardening might be practiced by these people.
- **South Downs Clan:** More shepherds and Woodmen. Probably quite similar in lifestyle to the Tyrn Gorthad clan. Of the six groups, these Edain would be the most likely to have any contact with Eregion, whether through trade or simply friendship.
- **Weather Hills Clan:** These people would be shepherds and farmers, and perhaps more inclined to engage in trade and travel than the South Downs and Tyrn Gorthad clans, whose homelands were somewhat isolated by general terrain. The Weather Hills Clan probably would have contact with the Marachians through the Dwarven trade.
- **North Downs Clan:** These Bëorians would the most insulated of the six groups, unless their settlements extended into the lowlands between the Weather Hills and Baranduin. Like the Emyn Uial and Nenuial clans, they would probably have contact with the northern peoples. But these Edain would be less likely to have contact with the Elves, except for the Nandorin and Sindarin Wandering Companies. Theirs would be a frontier culture, perhaps, given to greater wariness against the evil creatures which passed through or settled in northern Eriador after the fall of Morgoth.



THE EDAINIC CULTURES

What do we know of the Edain? Húrin's people herded cattle and rode horses. In The Peoples of Middle-earth, we learn that the Edain of the Vales of Anduin and Rhovanion also tamed horses, and that they "became the chief providers of food, as herdsmen, shepherds, and land-tillers...." Sheep are mentioned in the tale of Aldarion and Erendis in *Unfinished Tales,* and again in the Appendix to *The Lord of the Rings.*

The Edain of the Second Age would have been more warlike than the Edain of the First Age (east of the Hithaeglir). Tolkien notes that "when Morgoth fell and Angband was destroyed, hosts of the Orks fled eastwards seeking homes. They were now masterless and without any general leadership, but they were well- armed and very numerous, cruel, savage, and reckless in assault. In the battles that followed the Dwarves were outnumbered, and though they were the most redoubtable of all the Speaking Peoples they were glad to make alliance with Men."

We know little enough of how the Edain lived in Beleriand. Húrin dwelt in a stone house with a walled courtyard and outbuildings in Dor-lómin, but his people must have been taught much by the Noldor. Would the Edain of Eriador and Rhovanion have learned as much from the Elves living close by them? But perhaps being associated with the Dwarves of Durin's Folk, the Edain of Rhovanion were compensated somewhat for lack of contact with the Eldar of Beleriand: "Men held them in awe and were eager to learn from them; and the Longbeards were very willing to use Men for their own purposes. Thus there grew up in those regions the economy, later characteristic of the dealings of Dwarves and Men (including Hobbits): Men became the chief providers of food, as herdsmen, shepherds, and land-tillers, which the Dwarves exchanged for work as builders, road-makers, miners, and the makers of things of craft, from useful tools to weapons and arms and many other things of great cost and skill...."

Tolkien mentions three Longbeard cities in the First and Second Ages: Gundabad, where Durin awoke, Moria (Khazad-dûm), and the Iron Hills. There were probably other places where the Dwarves lived, but these were the chief regions, apparently, and so there must have been Men living close by them. River traffic should have figured prominently for the Edain living along the Anduin and Carnen, and boating was a skill they were said to have developed while living on the shores of the Sea of Rhûn.

Boating implies fishing and trade, of course, but perhaps also ferrying traffic. Did these Men interact with the Silvan Elves, who also used boats and rafts to cross the river? Tolkien mentions Raft-elves in The Hobbit, and it is appealing to wonder if perhaps there were ancient clans of Silvan Elves who specialized in boating and rafting, as opposed to those who specialized in the woodcraft for which they were later named Wood-elves.

The Edain, Tolkien writes, "dwelt largely in scattered homesteads and villages, and if they drew together into small townships they were poorly defended, at best by dikes and wooden fences." There were then no great cities, no communities with stone walls and high towers such as the Noldor taught the Edain to build in Beleriand (though all the Edainic communities appear to have been less sophisticated than the Eldarin cities). As warriors the Edain were "lightly armed, chiefly with bows." They served as scouts in the field to "keep watch on movements of [Dwarven and Mannish] enemies; and if the Orks dared to assemble in the open for some great raid, they would gather great force of horsed archers to surround them and destroy them."

This is significantly different from Edainic warriors of Beleriand. They served as infantry, or had only few cavalry who were nonetheless armed with swords. In the Third Age the cavalry of Rohan is the best described of the forces of Northmen. The Rohirrim appear to have had few archers and favored the lance. Hence, the battle tactics described here are different from those of the First and Third Age wars.

A BRIEF CHRONOLOGY

This chronology is intended solely to provide background for a gaming world, and though perhaps consistent with Tolkien's chronology should not be construed as representative or an attempt to represent Tolkien's chronology.

FIRST AGE

c. 150 The Edain settle near Rhun.

c. 200 The Edain migrate as far west as the Misty Mountains and establish contact with the Dwarves of Durin's Folk. Some clans pass over the mountains.

c. 310 The Edain enter Beleriand.

c. 375 After the great Council of the Edain, some of the Marachians return to Eriador.

455 After the Dagor Bragollach, the Bëorians and Marachians of Estolad return to Eriador. About this time, the Folk of Bór, the Folk of Ulfang, and related clans migrate north along the Lhûn.

c. 500 Rumors of the great war in Beleriand reach the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm and are passed on to the Edain.

c. 590 After the War of Wrath ends, many evil creatures begin to pass through or near the lands of Durin's Folk and the Edainic peoples of Eriador and Rhovanion.

c. 40 Khazad-dûm's population expands as the cities of Nogrod and Belegost are abandoned or diminished by the flight of the Firebeards and Broadbeams.

SECOND AGE

c. 100 The Dwarves and Edain establish military alliances to deal with the Orcs, dragons, werewolves, trolls, vampires, and other fell creatures which escaped from Angband's destruction. About this time the Edain of Eriador probably re-establish contact with the Elves of Beleriand.

c. 100-500 Many Sindar migrate eastward, settling in Eriador or passing over the Hithaeglir to establish realms in the lower Vales of the Anduin.

c. 500 Sauron begins to influence events in Middle-earth.

600 Vëantur the Númenórean sails to Middle-earth. The Edain of Eriador send twelve chieftains to meet with him.

725-727 Aldarion, Prince of Númenor, visits Middle-earth and travels throughout Eriador. This is Vëantur's last voyage to Middle-earth.

c. 750 As trade with Khazad-dûm expands in Eriador, the Men of the Vales of Anduin become more populous.

c. 750-799 During this time Aldarion forms the Guild of Venturers in Númenor and he establishes the haven of Vinyalondë at the mouth of the Gwathló, though it is only seasonally inhabited.

806-813 Aldarion's seven-year sojourn in Middle-earth.

816-820 Aldarion sails the Palarran for the first time.

824-829 Aldarion and most of the Venturers of Númenor sail to Middle-earth.

829-843 Aldarion's long voyage. He sails first to Vinyalondë and then south along the coast to Harad. During his absence Vinyalondë is flooded and plundered by the Gwathuirim.

863-869 Aldarion returns to Vinyalondë but it is ruined. He rebuilds the haven but the Gwathuirim harass his men. Rumors of a dark lord who hates the Númenóreans reach Aldarion in Vinyalondë.

877-882 Aldarion sails to Middle-earth in the Hirilondë and he works as an emissary for Gil-galad among the Edain.

884 King Aldarion sails to Mithlond.

c. 884-890 Sometime during these years, Aldarion appears to have ventured up the Gwathló to Tharbad, and then visited Eregion, where he met with Galadriel and Celeborn.

c. 900-1000 About this time, the Númenóreans probably begin to establish a haven at Tharbad on the Gwathló.

c. 990 About this time, King Aldarion sails to Middle-earth for the last time.

c.1000 With the founding of Mordor, evil creatures would begin to trouble the northern lands less. But about this time other clans of Men would begin encroaching on the oldest Edainic domains.

1075 Queen Ancalimë succeeds her father in Númenor.

1098 Tar-Aldarion passes away. Ancalimë abandons his policies in Middle-earth.

c.1200 Sauron persuades the Noldor of Eregion to accept his help. About this time, the Númenóreans begin to make permanent havens in Middle-earth.

c. 1500 The Gwaith-i-Mírdain begin forging the Rings of Power.

c.1590 Celebrimbor completes the Three Rings in Eregion.

c.1600 Stirred up by Sauron, Easterlings would begin raiding the towns of Rhovanion. The Númenóreans begin to establish a military presence in Lindon.

1693 The War of the Elves and Sauron begins.

1695 Armies from Mordor and Rhûn invade Rhovanion. The Edain are pushed up the rivers and through the forest into the vales of the Misty Mountains and the Grey Mountains. The Edainic civilization is destroyed. Sauron invades Eriador.

1697 Eregion falls to Sauron. Elrond retreats north to Imladris, gathering many Elves and Men.

1699 Sauron overruns Eriador. The Edainic peoples are devastated.

1700 The Númenórean fleet arrives in Lindon. Sauron is defeated at the Battle of Sarn Ford and driven south.

1701 Sauron is defeated at the Battle of the Gwathló and driven out of Eriador completely. Elrond and Gil-galad destroy the army besieging Imladris.

2350 Pelargir is built and becomes the chief haven of the Faithful Númenóreans.

2899 Ar-Adûnakhor takes the sceptre in Númenor. From this time forward, the Faithful Dúnedain begin to concentrate their settlements in the lands between Pelargir and the Gulf of Lhûn.

After the war the Edainic peoples slowly recovered. The Edain of Eriador intermarried with Númenóreans and eventually formed the greater part of the people of Arnor (some 1,600 years later). The Edain of Rhovanion gradually resettled the Vales of Anduin and Greenwood the Great, becoming the Free Men of the North. Sometime during the latter half of the Second Age the Hobbits appear to have migrated west, perhaps soon after Sauron began conquering new lands in the East.

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BROKEN COVENANT

Brian McNeilly: 15 Ravenscroft Court, Stittsville, Ontario K2S 1R3, Canada (bmcneilly@cyberus.ca)

This adventure takes place in the year T.A. 1640 during the reign of King Argeleb II of Arthedain. Mont of the action takes place in the Endless Plain east of Fornost Erain and southwest of Angmar. The adventure is designed for a party of 4-6 characters of low to mid levels.

INTRODUCTION

King Argeleb's adoptive daughter, Míriel, is missing, as is her tutor, Belegund, a respected and trusted member of the royal court. Also missing is Argeleb's seal, an enchanted device commonly worn by the king in public on a chain about his neck. It is coin-shaped, with the royal seal of Arthedain on one face. The seal is used to place the king's mark on all important documentation of the realm, including new laws passed and messages sent in his name. Its enchantment allows the king to verify that his decrees are just, for the seal glows if it is used on any document that contains words that are truthful. Naturally, this artifact has become somewhat symbolic of the rule of Argeleb, and he fears that if he is seen without it, the people he rules might lose faith in their liege.

Fearing corruption within his court, Argeleb has asked the wizard Mithrandir to provide some "outside" help to locate Míriel and Belegund, and to recover the seal. Using Fornost's *palantír,* the king has determined that Míriel left the city with Belegund, disappearing with the seal into the Uvethlad, the Endless Plain that stretches east of Fornost to the Ettenmoors of Rhudaur (now under the Witch-king's dominion).

In addition to this disclosure, the wizard has learned news of Belegund and Míriel from Gorfarg, his spy in the Uvethlad. Gorfarg is a Half-orc whose life Mithrandir saved many years ago. The rogue has since pledged his life to the wizard, his only true friend. Mithrandir has used Gorfarg as a spotter for Orc movements in the northern parts of Eriador.

Several days ago, Gorfarg caught sight of a man and a woman moving northeast, towards some haunted ruins which the Orcs of that region name Grontar. He followed for a while but was forced to take cover from a storm. When he emerged, the travelers were gone. Gorfarg has also indicated to Mithrandir that Orc and Hillman movements in the Uvethlad have increased of late—they are apparently searching for something.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

Throughout his many years of service to Argeleb, Belegund has been slowly and carefully corrupted by the Witch-king. Now, he has become an effective spy in the Court of Arthedain. The Witch-king has decided to deal a severe blow to Argeleb, and has tasked his agent with stealing the seal. Through sorcery, Belegund coerced Míriel into stealing the seal from the king's study. Míriel was an easy target for Belegund's treachery, being a somewhat spoiled and restless youth. His spell was so effective that Belegund decided to present both Míriel and the seal to his new liege at Carn Dûm in Angmar. The strong-willed Míriel, however, was eventually able to overcome Belegund's magic. When she discovered the treachery of her tutor, she escaped after attacking him.

Alone in the Úvethlad, Míriel fell under the loathsome control of Shanik, an evil spider of Ungoliant's brood whose lair lay within the wreckage of an old mine which once served as a way-station along a great northern highway that the Dwarves were then constructing between Khazad-dûm and the Dwarf-holds of Angmar. Shanik appeared not long after the Witch-king made his first assaults upon those holds, entering the mine and enslaving its inhabitants, using her dark enchantments to sus-

tain and control them in order to delve her own "web" fortress beneath the mine.

During the many, many years she has laired here, Shanik has found nothing to nourish her except these Dwarven captives, and there is little of their *thúlë* left for the spider to feed upon, leaving her greatly weakened. Míriel's arrival was a distinct pleasure for Shanik, and the weakened woman fell easily under the spider's enchantment which drew her into the mine. Míriel is still alive, but Shanik has greatly enjoyed consuming the strong *thúlë* of the Dúnadan lady.

A MISSION FOR THE KING

At the request of Mithrandir and Argeleb, the adventurers find themselves in the court of Fornost Erain. They have been ushered into a very private room within the castle for a private briefing. Each person present has come for a different reason: some owe the wizard a debt which he has asked to be repaid, others serve the king and are loyal to their liege. Regardless of why they are here, each realizes the importance of the mission they are about to undertake, evidenced by the secrecy of the meeting and the grim expressions on the faces of the king and his wise associate. Mithrandir briefs the PCs as the king nods his agreement to the wizard's plans.

Mithrandir informs them that the king has asked him to assemble a parry of worthy adventurers to look into a crisis that has arisen within the royal court. Argeleb's niece, Míriel, has disappeared. She left Fornost with her tutor, Belegund, an aging gentleman who has been in the king's service for many years. The cause for her departure is unclear. The king and Mithrandir

both believe that foul play is involved — perhaps Belegund has even kidnapped the girl for unknown reasons. As of yet there has not been any kind of a ransom demanded for her return. The *palantír* has revealed that Míriel apparently travels willingly with Belegund in the direction of Angmar.

The wizard does not yet tell the PCs that Argeleb's seal has also gone missing. Mithrandir feels that no one should be aware of this prematurely, since there might be other corruption in the court which the king must deal with, and this could be difficult when he is missing a recognized symbol of his authority.

The king supplies the PCs with any equipment they may request (within reason), instructing them to be very careful with their provisions, for there be little available if they have to travel far into the Úvethlad. Mithrandir accompanies them to the last watchpost due east of Fornost, instructing them to continue east for another forty miles, where they reach will some hills. From there they must follow the signs he has laid for them, traveling north to rendezvous with their guide. The wizard does not tell the PCs anything about their guide, other than that he is an rather unique individual. The group cannot use horses once they are past the border, since they would be too easily tracked by Orc-patrols.

GM Note: *Mithrandir's "signs" could be anything from marks on the ground to magical symbols, or perhaps an animal friend who leads the way. Use something interesting that suits your particular party.*

AN INTERESTING GUIDE

After a few days of uncomfortable travel (and difficulty translating the "signs" of a wizard) the PCs arrive at Gorfarg's cave. An Orc-patrol has been following Gorfarg for a few days now, and has tracked him to his cave. The Half-orc is not home right now, so the Orcs have laid an ambush. It should be a big surprise to them when a fully armed parry arrives on the scene!

If the situation gets out of hand once the trap has been sprung, Gral attempts to flee. If, on the other hand, the PCs experience difficulty, Gorfarg (who has been watching his would-be ambushers from a distance) arrives to provide some support. It will be an interesting encounter when the PCs realize this Orkish fellow is to help them with their mission!

At the conclusion of the encounter, Gorfarg invites the PCs into his home (a rather smelly cave, but warm and dry) and relates what he knows of the princess and her tutor. He has been instructed by Mithrandir to take the PCs to Grontar, which lies about a week's travel to the east of these hills.

THE HAUNTED RUINS

Grontar is actually the remains of Dol Barad, an ancient Arnorian keep once occupied by a great warrior who possessed a magical artifact capable of disclosing visions of future events. The remnants of this enchantment should provide the PCs with the clues necessary to locate Míriel. The top of the keep's tower contains a room with four windows, each facing one direction. Within each window is a small gem set into the stone. When touched, each stone gives a vision of an event that will soon come to pass in roughly the direction m which the gem faces.

- **East:** a wounded woman limping into the shadows of a stone archway.
- **South:** Orcs and Hillmen, scouring the countryside, searching for something.
- **West:** King Argeleb in his study, looking at a plush display pillow with an empty impression on it which is the shape of a large coin.
- **North:** more Orcs and Hillmen scouring the countryside.

In fact, Dol Barad is the site where Míriel and Belegund hid from the storm when Gorfarg espied them. Here it was that Míriel overcame the spell that was controlling her. She realized the treachery of her tutor when she discovered her father's seal among Belegund's belongings. Míriel

waited for an opportune moment when Belegund was writing in his journal, and then attacked him, wounding him quite severely. Belegund managed to wound Míriel in turn with his dagger before he was overcome, forcing Míriel to flee with the seal.

It will become obvious to the PCs that a fight took place within Dol Barad and that one of the combatants left the keep, as evidenced by the trail of blood leading out of the ruins. The other (presumably dead) appears to have been dragged into the keep's dungeon. Should any of the PCs have a reading knowledge of ancient Adûnaic (the court language of Carn Dûm), they may be able to translate a few of the entries in Belegund's blood-stained diary, which lies on the floor of the keep. These reveal the tutor's treachery:

It was easy to convince the girl to retrieve the item from the king's study. My spell was far too powerful for her. The Master will be pleased.

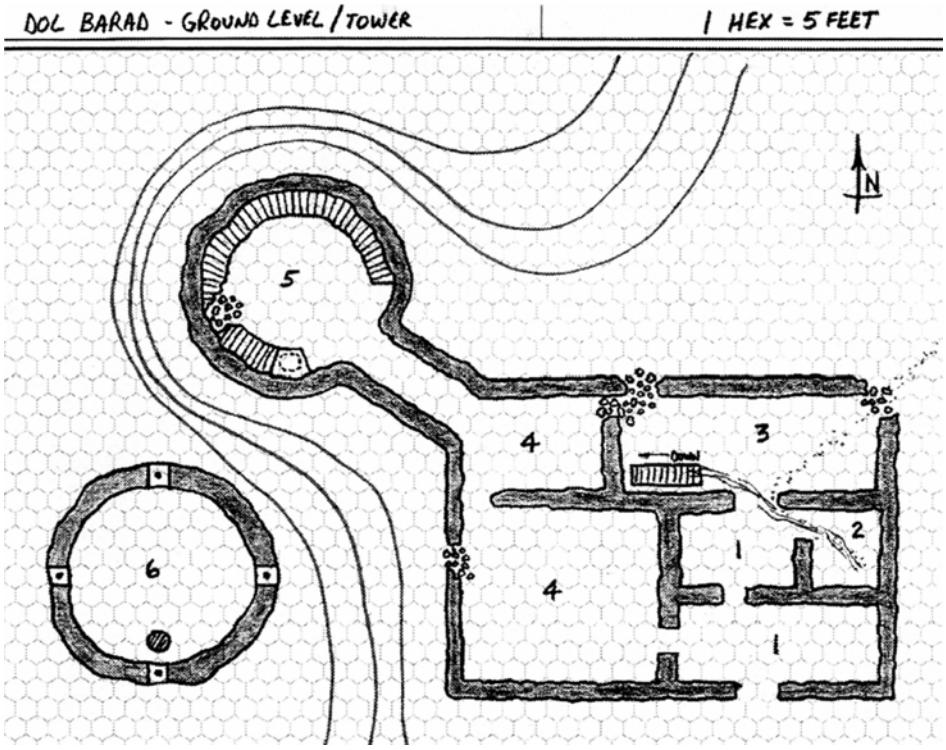
She is doubting her resolve. I must continue to convince her of the importance of her mission. Within a fortnight, both she and the item will be with the Master.

Dol Barad's dungeon contains the crypt of its former master, decorated with a stone carving of an armored man. The hands of the carving appear to have held something, but now lie empty. The warrior's body has since become inhabited by an evil spirit and now stalks the lower levels. The body of a grave robber can be found in the dungeon, clutching a magical sword stolen from the crypt. If the PCs return the sword to its rightful place, the hands of the stone figure once again hold a stone version of the sword, and the evil spirit flees the body of the dead warrior. It would be a decent thing if the PCs were to reseal the crypt.

In addition to the barrow-wight, Dol Barad's dungeon has also become the lair of some giant spiders (probably spawn of Shanik). It was these creatures that dragged Belegund to his fate. Despite his wounds, Belegund is still alive, though barely so. There is nothing the PCs can do for him, but if they question him, he speaks a few dying words which reveal his treachery against the king: "The king will fail without the Seal...the people will no longer trust his judgment...I have failed, but the Master will be pleased...the Seal is lost...."

SOME ORKISH INFORMATION

The PCs may follow Míriel's trail until it dissipates into nothing. (An extremely gifted tracker might follow her path for a few miles, but after that it becomes lost.) Míriel has traveled further east, near to a rather large encampment of Orcs and evil Hillmen deep within the Rhudaurian frontier. If the PCs don't think of it, Gorfarg may suggest that perhaps an Orc from this area might know where to find the strange doorway they witnessed Míriel entering in the vision at Dol Barad.



Gorfarg provides a map of the encampment, but to attack it would be foolish. By observing the camp, the PCs see that small patrols are sent out on a regular basis. One of these would be an easy target to learn of Míriel's whereabouts. If they succeed in capturing one of the Orcs, the PCs may discover that Míriel entered a haunted place avoided even by the Witch-king's soldiers, some 20 miles east of the encampment.

SHANIK'S LAIR

If the Orcs of the encampment learn of the PCs' presence, they pursue them as far as the entrance to Shanik's lair. The leaders may send in a patrol after the PCs, but the first trap and their fear of the place stop them from following the PCs further into the mine.

If the PCs manage to reach the inner chamber of Shanik's web, they find Míriel's inert form lying upon a slab of stone. The spider observes the PCs, judging their strength. Shanik is still weak, however, and desires to avoid a physical confrontation with these newcomers. Even though she would easily defeat them, they might wound her significantly. Initially, then, Shanik may seek to turn the PCs against one another by some influencing spells. Should they attempt to remove Míriel, however, Shanik grabs her victim, retreating to her inner lair.

Realizing that an outright assault on the spider in her own fortress would be suicide, the PCs might attempt to bargain with her. Shanik is willing to surrender both Míriel and the Seal (a meaningless trinket to her) in exchange for an "offering" from each of the PCs. Each is required to provide the spider with a bit of their *thúlë* (a feat which Shanik accomplishes by stabbing one of her long claws into their arm). She offers to perform the "task" on each PC in turn, while the others watch from a safe distance, so that they can witness the fact that everyone is allowed to return safely to their comrades.

The GM may have to be a bit creative here, for the PCs may offer alternatives to Shanik for Míriel's life. The spider refuses anything that will not sustain her, but may require only one or two of the PCs to sacrifice part of themselves for Míriel. Shanik is particularly delighted to accept less "offerings" if she may draw some of the thúlë from an Elven or Half-elven PC. No matter what the final bargain is, Gorfarg absolutely refuses to participate in such an offering to Shanik (who becomes quite annoyed if the Half-orc comes close to her at all).

The GM should have a little fun with this encounter, making the PCs feel really uncomfortable with the prospect of bargaining with a powerful spider. Ultimately, the PCs have to make a significant sacrifice to come away with Míriel and Argeleb's seal. PCs who make an "offering" to Shanik in exchange for Míriel's life find themselves feeling weak and ill for a few days after the incident. This translates into a loss of 10 points of temporary Constitution and a -10 penalty to all actions until several days have been spent resting in bed.

FLIGHT ACROSS THE ÚVETHLAD

A rear entrance from Shanik's lair provides an escape route for the PCs, through a swamp which lies to the north. The PCs have to deal with a badly injured Míriel as well as with any of their own weakened comrades who participated in the sacrifice to Shanik. The Orcs and evil Hillmen in the vicinity pick up their trail soon after they emerge from the mine.

The GM can stretch out the chase across the Úvethlad as long as desired. The pursuers provide a constant threat as there are many patrols and larger companies still searching the area for Míriel and her treasure, relentlessly trailing the PCs from the encampment near Shanik's lair. The war party is led by a particularly nasty Orc named Sarus Dripping-axe, a harsh taskmaster; the Hillmen are led by one Braelar the Mighty.

Should the PCs decide to stop for a last stand against their pursuers, a map for an appropriate hill setting is provided. The PCs should be given an opportunity to defeat these enemies (with good planning, of course), but should things become grim, the GM could allow some help to arrive. Argeleb has been monitoring the PCs' progress using the *palantír* of Fornost, and may dispatch a contingent of soldiers into the Úvethlad to help them get back home shortly after the PCs leave Shanik's lair. The GM may even have Mithrandir return from the south in the nick of time to get the PCs out of trouble.

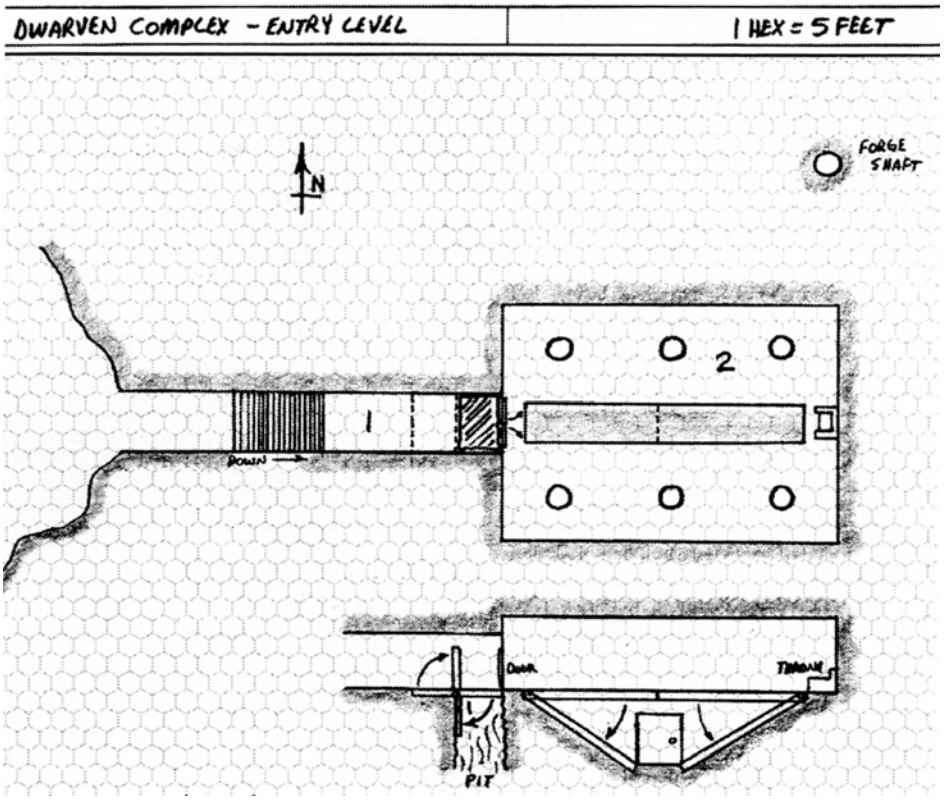
The Arthadanian soldiers (and Mithrandir, if he is there) assist the PCs and Míriel, tending wounds and providing food and water. After a day's rest, the contingent heads back westward, traversing the frontier without further encounter. The king honors the PCs as heroes of Arthedain, bestowing appropriate rewards upon them (although the honor of serving their king should be sufficient). Mithrandir, of course, is quite pleased with his choices for the mission (those that survived at least!).

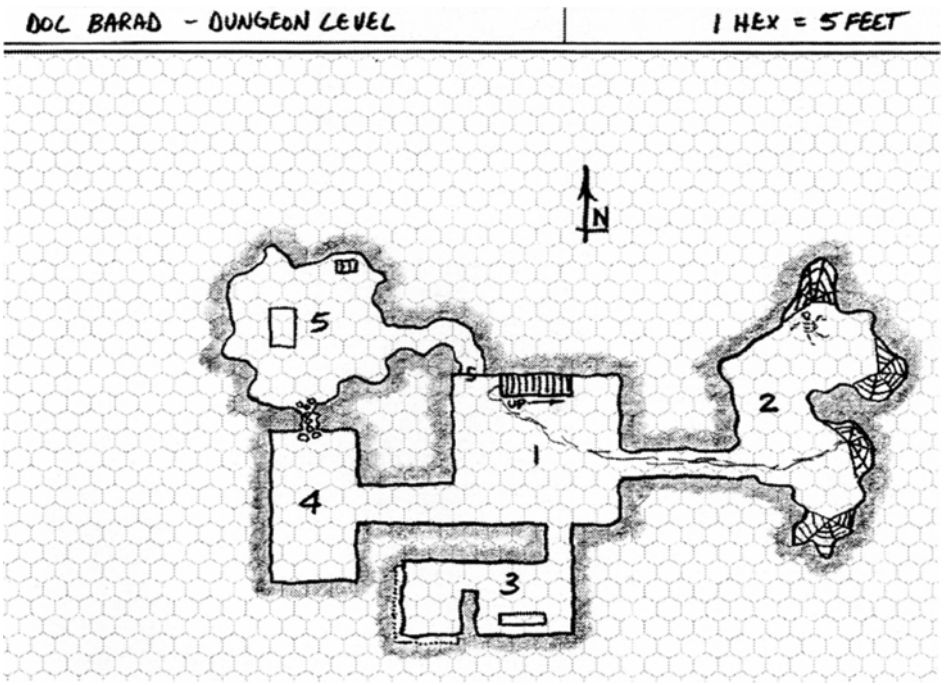
SITE DESCRIPTIONS

GRONTAR (DOL BARAD)

UPPER HALLS

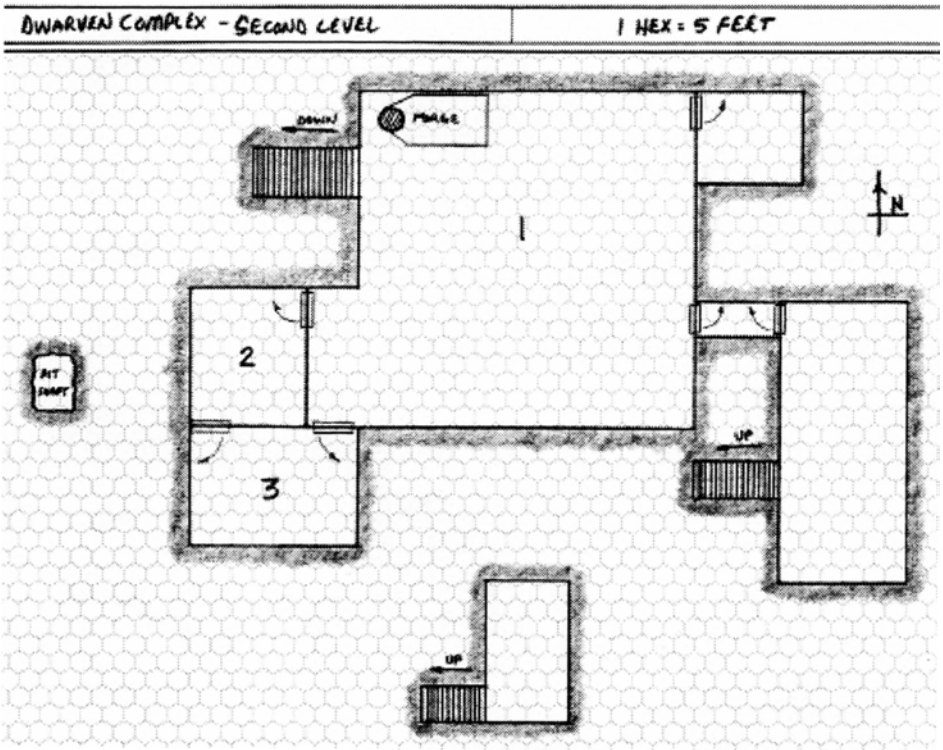
1. **Empty Halls.** Other than debris, these rooms contain nothing of interest, save a few rat tracks and droppings. The front door has long rotted away, leaving a large gaping hole in the south wall of the keep.
2. **Encampment.** This room was used by Míriel and Belegund as a refuge from the storm outside. Míriel's bloody trail from her fight with Belegund leads out to #3. Among the remains of the camp can be found Belegund's blood-covered journal and a small, wicked-looking dagger coated with dried blood (Míriel's).
3. **Back Room.** This room has two holes in the walls which may be used to gain entrance to the keep. Míriel's blood trail leads out of one of them and off into the wilderness. Marks in the dust can be seen leading down the stairs. These were left behind as the spiders dragged Belegund to their lair.
4. **Oh Rats!** These rooms contain a large number of rats who have moved in to escape the cold outside. They are very hungry but don't pose much of a threat, only a continual annoyance.
5. **Stairwell.** A circular stairwell leads up the sides of the tower to #6. A small platform sits beneath a hole to the room above. The trap door and ladder have long since rotted away. A 15' section of the stairs has collapsed, about 50' from the floor below. The remainder of the stairs are unstable at best, and some careful planning have to take place to safely get to the top.
6. **Crystal Room.** This room is featureless except for four open windows facing east, west, north and south. Within each window is a small gem set in a stone pedestal. When each gem is touched, a vision appears in the window. If the gems are removed from the pedestals, the enchantment is broken and they become trinkets worth a few silvers each.

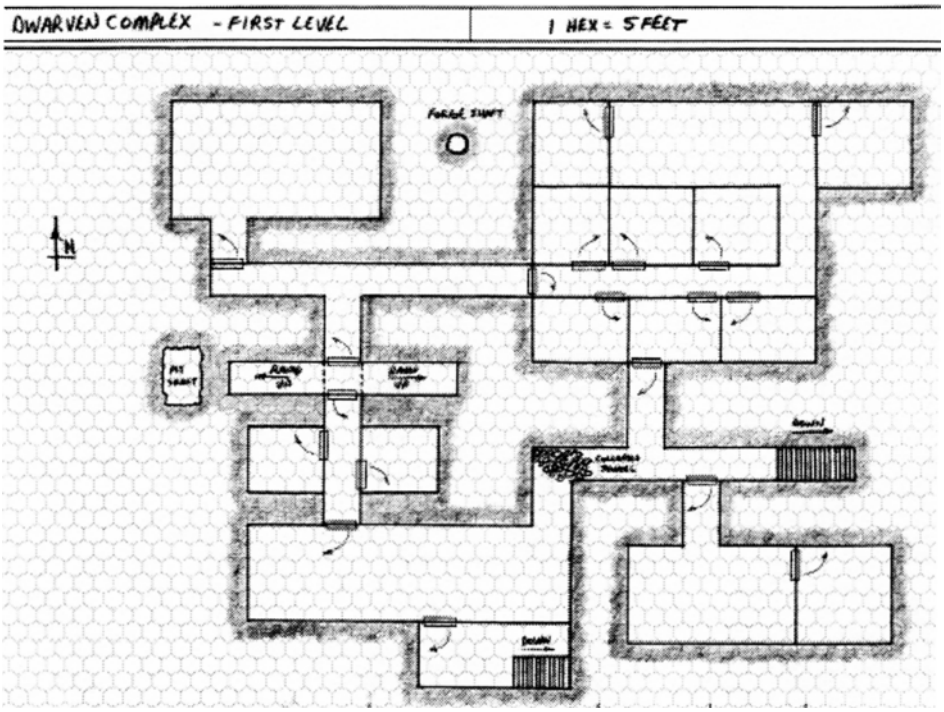




DUNGEON

1. **Empty Cellar.** This room is empty save for the drag marks in the dust that lead from the stairs to the east room (#2).
2. **Spider Lair.** Three large spiders make their home here, and wait in ambush for anyone they hear in the room next door. Belegund can be found in the webs, and the skeletal remains of the tomb thief can be found on the floor in the northern part of the room. The magical sword lies near the corpse. A few coins are scattered on the floor about the room, and a 50 sp gem can be found in the rotting belt pouch on the thief.
3. **Study.** Any signs of the former use of this room have rotted away by now. A stone work bench lies in the eastern part of the room and bookshelves are carved into the walls in the wrest, but only debris occupies this place now.
4. **Storage Room.** Remnants of old boxes and barrels may be found here, but nothing else of interest. The tunnel to the crypt which was used by the thief is in the north wall. Cold air emanates from this hole, causing fear in those that gaze inside.
5. **Crypt.** The former master of the keep occupies this room, attacking any who enter. The evil spirit which occupies the body of the warrior can only be dispelled by returning the magical sword to the crypt. A small locked chest sits in a cor-





ner of the room, containing 5 gp, 35 sp and a jeweled short sword (worth 200 sp).

SHANIK'S LAIR

ENTRY LEVEL

Many of the rooms of the mine are not described in these notes. They are simply empty, filled with debris, or have contents left up to the GM's imagination.

1. **Entrance Tunnel.** This hallway contains a pit trap shown in profile on the map. If the door is touched without an appropriate password being spoken, the trap is sprung. There is little if any chance of adventurers knowing the password, so they have to find another way to get around the trap, which is hard to detect. The pit leads down to a pool of leeches on the third level.
2. **Throne Room.** The Dwarven chieftain met visitors here, who approached the throne on a long walkway of marble inlaid into the floor. The marble floor piece actually conceals the entrance to the mine. A hidden mechanism in the throne (hard to find) causes the floor to split in the middle, descending to form two ramps leading down to doors on the first level below (a profile view on the map shows the positions of the ramps when lowered).

FIRST LEVEL

This level is mostly empty and is left up to the GM to detail. Many of the rooms contain remnants of the Dwarven miners who lived here many years ago. The stairs in the east lead down to the second level.

SECOND LEVEL

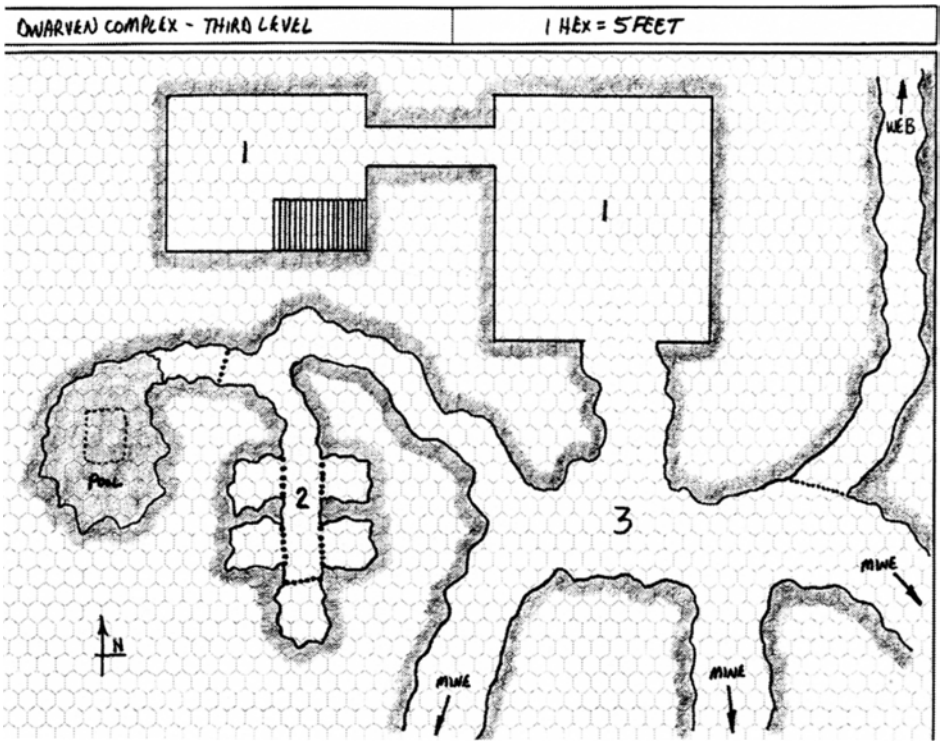
1. **Workshop.** This room was the workshop used by the Dwarves, it contains a number of anvils on rock pedestals, and a large forge in the north west corner. The small room in the north east corner was the office of the mine foreman. Among the debris here is a sealed box containing a book of Dwarven mining techniques (+20 to mining skill).
2. **Tool Storage.** A large number of decayed mining implements are found in this room on hooks set in the walls
3. **Ore Storage.** A pile of iron ore occupies the center of this room.

THIRD LEVEL

1. **Mine Storage.** These two rooms contain the remnants of mining equipment.

2. Cells. Enemies of the Dwarves were put in here. Those that triggered the trap in the Entrance Tunnel ended up in the cold water of the pool. The pool now contains only 8' of sludge, the surface of which is 20' below the top of the chamber (the tunnel above extends another 60' to the Entrance). Anyone falling in here find themselves in the unfortunate situation of being lunch for 10 hungry giant leeches which now occupy the pool.

3. Mine Entrance. The three southern tunnels enter a maze of tunnels formerly mined by the Dwarves. The dotted line shown at the entrance to the north tunnel marks where newer construction can be observed. This tunnel leads to Shanik's Web.



SHANIK'S WEB

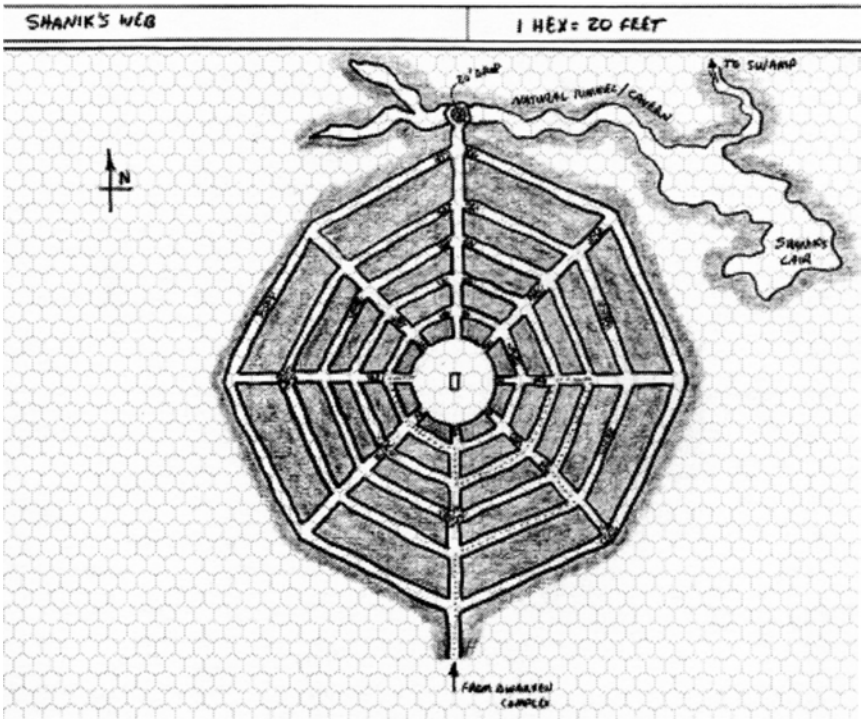
This part of the mine should be very frightening, even for the most hardy adventurer. The moaning of the enslaved Dwarves can be heard throughout the mine as they continue to cut new tunnels. Various portions of the tunnels have been blocked by webs, designed to confuse anyone entering the mine and increasing their agitation.

The Dwarves who remain under Shanik's control ignore the PCs and continue with their mindless work. The Dwarves look alive, but their eyes and cheeks are sunken. Their flesh is pale and sickly, and their clothes and armor are rotted and decayed. Anyone attacking a Dwarf meets no resistance. Should the PCs attempt to restrain and speak to a Dwarf, they receive no response, but the eyes of the formerly proud warrior display the despair of their situation.

Eventually, the path (shown as a dotted line on the map) leads to the central domed chamber. Míriel lies on the stone slab in the center of the room. She is alive but her body is cold and still, filled with the slow acting poison of the spider. Shanik conceals herself behind a Darkness spell cast on the ceiling of the chamber. She observes the PCs and attacks if appropriate. If she is wounded once, or if the PCs attempt to remove Míriel, she grabs Míriel's inert form (if possible) and escapes to her lair (out the northern tunnel).

If Míriel is still with the PCs, she eventually regains consciousness, telling the PCs that Argeleb's seal is here, probably in the spider's lair. If Míriel is taken by Shanik, the PCs are forced to follow.

The northern tunnel leads to a pit which drops down 20'. The tunnel continues to the east and enters a natural cave. Shanik's lair is in the southern part of the cave. A small tunnel to the north emerges in the middle of a swamp on the northern side of the hill containing the mine.



STATS

GORFARG

Hits: 95; Melee OB: 65ba/60sc; Missile OB: 100cb; AT (DB): 13 (10/30); Shield: Y (20); MovM: 50; Lvl: 2.

Profession: Rogue/Hunter.

Stats: Ag 98, Co 95, Me 74, Re 70, SD 74, Em 35, In 71, Pr 32, Ou 91, St 93.

Skills: Armor (Chain) 60, Swimming 35, Climbing 45, Observation 25, Detect Traps 25, Locate Hidden 25, Read Tracks 35, Tracking 35, Stalk 40, Hide 40, Ambush 35, Silent Attack 35.

Equipment: composite bow (Orkish make: +10), furs worth 50 sp, home-made battle-axe.

MÍRIEL

Hits: 35; Melee OB: 35bs/30da; Missile OB: 451cb; AT (DB): 1 (25); Shield: N; MovM: 55; Lvl: 2.

Profession: Rogue.

Stats: Ag 92, Co 75, Me 86, Re 74, SD 65, Em 78, In 65, Pr 88, Qu 94, St 90.

Skills: Armor (Soft Leather) 25, Swimming 45, Climbing 30, Observation 35, Detect Traps 20, Locate Hidden 20, Stalk 30, Hide 30.

ORC PATROL AT GORFARG'S CAVE

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT (DB)	Shield	Melee	Missile	Speed
Gral	4	60	14 (30)	N	50bs		MD/MD
Lugbutt*	5	45	1 (40)	N	20sc		MD/MD
archer #1	2	35	9(35)	N	25ss	40lbs	MD/MD
archer #2	2	35	9(35)	N	25ss	401bs	MD/MD
archer #3	1	20	9(20)	N	20ss	301cb	MD/MD
archer #4	1	20	9(20)	N	20ss	301cb	MD/MD
soldier #1	2	45	13 (45)	N	40bs		MD/MD
soldier #2	2	45	13 (45)	N	40bs		MD/MD
soldier #3	1	35	13 (35)	N	35bs		MD/MD
soldier #4	1	35	13 (35)	N	35bs		MD/MD

* 40 PP; knows all evil Channeling lists to 5th level.

GRONTAR (DOL BARAD)

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT(DB)	Shield	Melee	Missile	Speed
*	165	1(75)	N	90LBa		SL/VF	
Spinwell †	8	160	4(40)		70LPi/75LSt		MF/FA
Sticky †	8	160	4(40)		70LPi/75LSt		MF/FA
Threader †	8	160	4(40)		70LPi/75LSt		MF/FA

* 60' Fear radius; touch paralyzes or causes sorcerous sleep (RR to resist); touch drains 5 Co points/rnd.

PATROL FROM THE ORC-CAMP

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT (DB)	Shield	Melee	Missile	Speed
Bork	5	60	14 (30)	N	80ba		MD/MD
lieutenant	3	45	14 (30)	N	60sc		MD/MD
lieutenant	3	45	14 (30)	N	60sc		MD/MD
archer #1	2	30	9(30)	N	30ss	501cb	MD/MD
archer #2	2	30	9(30)	N	30ss	501cb	MD/MD
soldier #1	2	30	13 (30)	N	50sc		MD/MD
soldier #2	2	30	13 (30)	N	50sc		MD/MD

SHANIK'S LAIR

Name	Lvl	Hits	AT (DB)	Shield	Melee	Missile	Speed
Shanik*	30	350	18 (80)	N	100HPi/90LHo/100HBi		BF/VF

Leeches (10) †	0	4	1 (5)	N	30TGr		SL/SL

* lots of PP; knows just about any evil list (be imaginative); poison: resist vs level 10, if fail, -10/rnd cumulative on all actions (pass out at -100, dead at -200).

† suck 1 hit/rnd

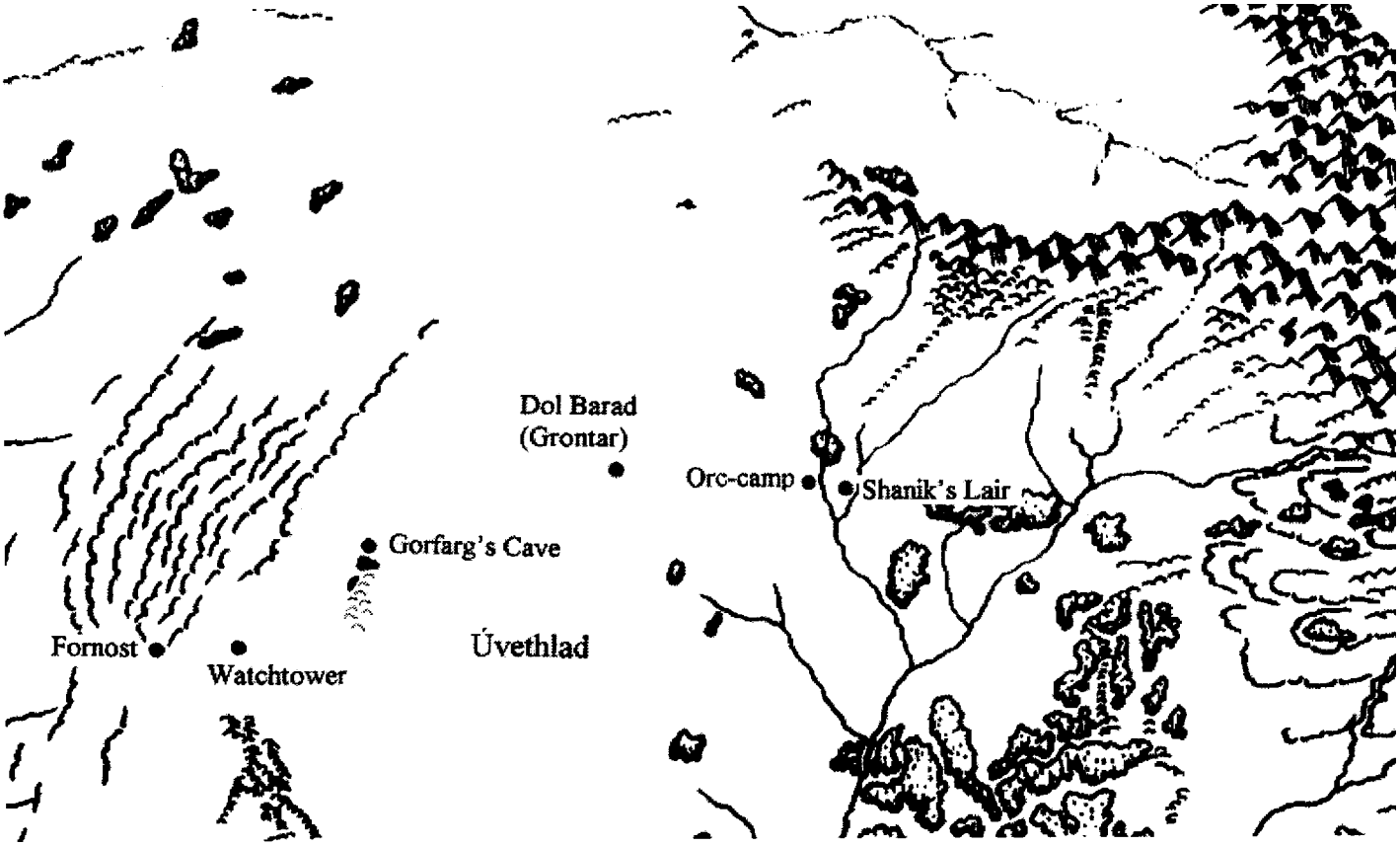
BATTLE AT THE HILL

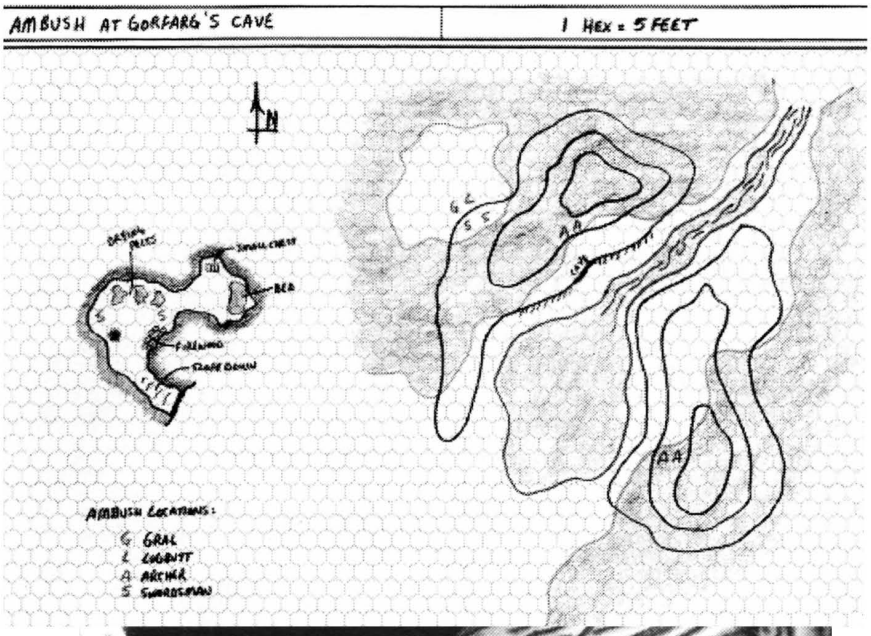
Name	Lvl	Hits	AT (DB)	Shield	Melee	Missile	Speed
Sarus	8	120	19 (30)	N	120ba*		MD/MD
lieutenant	4	80	15 (40)	Y20	80bs**		MD/MD
lieutenant	4	80	15 (40)	Y20	80bs**		MD/MD
soldier #1	3	30	10 (40)	Y20	50sc		MD/MD
soldier #2	3	30	10 (40)	Y20	50sc		MD/MD
soldier #3	2	25	10 (35)	Y20	40sc		MD/MD
soldier #4	2	25	10 (35)	Y20	40sc		MD/MD
soldier #5	2	25	10 (35)	Y20	40sc		MD/MD
soldier #6	2	25	10 (35)	Y20	40sc		MD/MD
archer #1	3	50	6(20)	N	30ss	75lbs	MD/MD
archer #2	3	50	6(20)	N	30ss	75lbs	MD/MD
archer #3	2	30	6(20)	N	20ss	60lcb	MD/MD
archer #4	2	30	6(20)	N	20ss	60lcb	MD/MD
Braelar #5		100	11 (50)	N	100th†		MD/MF
Hillmen (6)	3	60	9(60)	Y(20)	60 bs		MD/MF

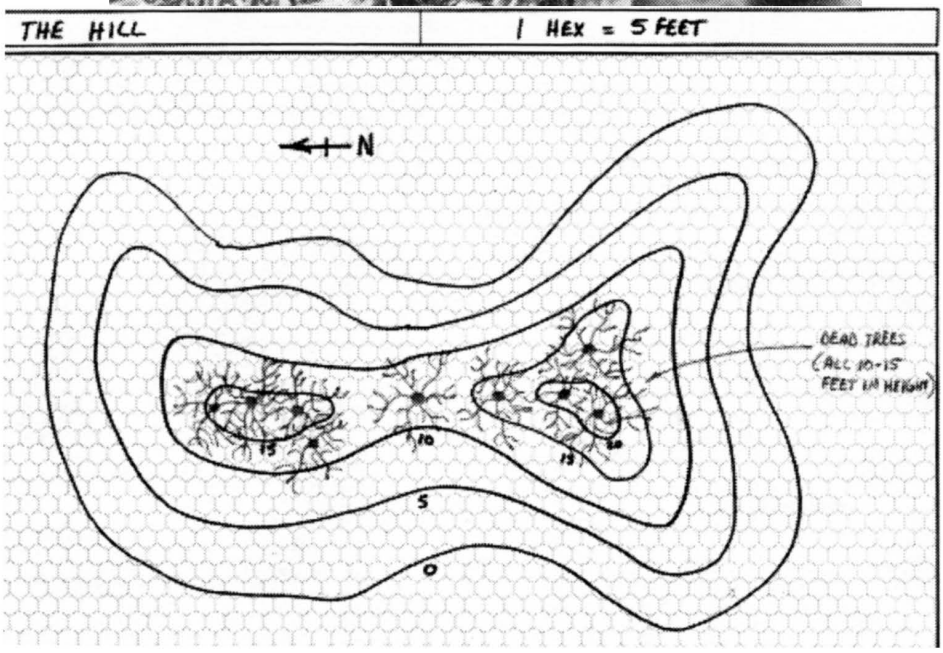
* + 15, non-magical

** +10, non-magical

† +10, non-magical




AMBUSH AT GORFARG'S CAVE
1 HEX = 5 FEET
N
AMBUSH LOCATIONS:
G GRAL
L LOOKOUT
A ARCHER
S SWORDSMAN


THE HILL
1 HEX = 5 FEET
N
DEAD TREES
(ALL 10-15
FEET IN HEIGHT)
15
10
15
20
5
0

Rastarin's Log

Bridget Buxton

Dear Captain Hardon,

your prowess has earned you a very LONG reputation, and I too long for the day when I may match my blade against yours. Until that day, be satisfied with this token of my esteem.

Rastarin VII

(Letter delivered to the Black Serpent, enclosed with mouldering head of one Captain Ramrod, spoon in eye socket.)

CHAPTER THREE:
A FAMILY REUNION

Meeting up with Kalin at Dol Amroth, the party (Rastarin, Clennan, Lytta, and Rassimus) learn from Prince Celdrahil that Daeron, their erstwhile ally, is only a few days ahead of them—obviously pursuing the trail of the Elendilmir for his own obscure purposes. With the help of a ranger named Telcontar they soon overtake him, but Daeron uses his Dúnadan mind tricks to convince their scrumpy-addled brains that he is not the traitor they're looking for. Rather, he claims, it is Rassimus' brother Tarassis who is secretly in league with Sangahyandion!

And so they continue the quest together, finding their way at last to the Paths of the Dead, where Morthec, the King of the Dead, guards the Elendilmir until a mortal with just claim should come.

"Your wait is over!" cries Kalin. "For I am both a Prince of Morthond and—I have just learned—a blood descendant of Elendil himself!"

"And I am his older twin sister!" adds Rastarin, snatching the gem before Kalin can get near it. But Morthec's generosity has its price: they must help him to defeat Irusan, the evil Oathbreaker-lord who seeks to supplant him. Irusan, he claims, can only be destroyed by the Gwaedhel sword, the twin weapon of his own spear. The rulers of Morthond traditionally wielded this sword, but the last person known to have possessed it was Rastarin's uncle Neithan. Their brother, Prince Arador, Daeron reveals, now rules in Morthond without sword, signet ring or sceptre.

"Then he rules without the blessing of our parents who died in the Plague," says Kalin, "and the items you speak of are probably still hidden somewhere within the castle vaults."

"That's settled then," says Rastarin. "It's time we paid a little unexpected visit to the Prince of Morthond."

There's nothing like inviting the undead to liven up your family reunion, so Lytta summons the corpse of a recently slain Oathbreaker, Skas, to join the party. While Rassimus, Kalin and Lytta enter Morthondost openly, Daeron leads the others in by a secret passage.

Kalin and his friends are welcomed into Arador's hall while Rastarin slips into the shadows just outside. The Prince is dining with about twenty other Dúnedain, but on his left sits... Tarassis! And though Kalin and Rassimus are welcomed by their respective brothers, the conversation is uneasy. Kalin tries to break the tension by singing a song about the legendary exploits of Rastarin's ship, the TCBS, a theme that brings scowls to the faces of the dinner guests. Rastarin, spying on them from a window, is horrified to recognise some of the pirates of the Red Cliffs. Catching Lytta's eye, she makes certain hand gestures that leave Lytta in no doubt about the presence of Captain Hardon's agents.

Lytta excuses herself and slips outside, where Rastarin is waiting (she says) for one of the pirates to leave so that she can discover what he knows.

"Good idea.. .but how are you going to do that?" Lytta whispers.

"Well, that's where you come in," Rastarin replies. "After I cut his throat you can interrogate his fleeing spirit."

"You can't just kill one of them in cold blood! I won't do it."

"Lytta, sometimes bad things have to be done in a good cause," Rastarin explains patiently. "Besides, torture is so messy—not to mention noisy." But Lytta is adamant, and finally convinces an exasperated Rastarin to rendezvous with Daeron instead.

Daeron, meanwhile, leads the others down to the castle's hidden vault, where they discover the royal signet ring of Morthond and the empty sheath of the Gwaedhel sword—the blade itself, they conclude, must still be with Neithan. But their contemplation (and theft) of the castle treasure is interrupted when Lytta and Skas are suddenly gripped by a strange sense of foreboding. Someone in the castle has just summoned a spirit assassin! These are malevolent spirits bound by Irusan to eliminate those who oppose him.

Back at the castle, Kalin retires after dinner to the library, where his search for information about the Gwaedhel sword is interrupted by a dreadful vision. It is his eldest sister, Aranwen, chained and miserable in a dank dungeon. Horrified, Kalin does not notice a sudden evil presence in the room behind him. His next sensation is of a cold blade stabbing into his spine, and he falls to the floor with a scream.

At Kalin's cry, his companions drop all thoughts of concealment and come running. They succeed in dissipating the spirit assassin, but it is already too late for Kalin. "Our sister Aranwen lives...

here...in this castle. Arador holds her prisoner. It was he who summoned this demon against us!" he gasps. After an inordinately long and melodramatic eulogy (of himself) Kalin collapses dramatically into a pool of blood, his spirit lingering only long enough to receive an Oscar from the prophetess Ygana before departing.

In time-honoured fashion, Kalin's companions use his death as an excuse for blowing the entire special effects budget for the rest of the adventure on a vengeful rampage of bloodletting and pyrotechnics throughout the castle. Tarassis and some of Hardon's men escape, but our heroes succeed in rescuing Aranwen and capturing the Prince.

Aranwen, they learn, has been imprisoned since Arador usurped her claim to rule Morthond by faking her death during the Plague some four years earlier. Like Kalin, the gentle princess pities her brother rather than hates him.

"In the last few months I fear he has become more a victim than an ally of the evil powers he consorted with," she says sadly.

Rastarin, however, hales from the less gentle side of the family. She soon 'persuades' Arador to admit that he is a member of a cabal that serves Sangahyandion. Irusan, Hardon and one called Zimrakhil in Umbar are also involved, but for what ultimate purpose he does not know. Tarassis and Hardon's men showed up as soon as it was learned that his "bitch-sister and elf-loving brother" might be paying a visit. Arador was keeping Aranwen alive, he says, until she revealed location of the royal signet ring.

"You mean THIS signet ring?" asks Rastarin. Arador strains to open his bruised and puffy eyes, and beholds a gold ring on a closed fist approaching his face at high velocity. It is the last thing he ever sees.

Dear Hardon,

We have to stop seeing each other like this. In seven days I will seek you at Endil on the Cape of Belfalas at midnight alone. Yes, I know we've had our little lover's quarrels, but secretly you know I've always longed for the day when I could welcome your mighty ship into my harbour. I send this message care of our mutual acquaintance Arador. Do not disappoint me!

Rastarin VII

(Letter delivered to the Black Serpent, enclosed with mouldering head of one Prince Arador, spoon in eye socket.)

Once Aranwen is restored to her rightful throne, the true value of her signet ring is revealed. Inside lies a tiny key, which opens a secret compartment somewhere in the nearby tower of Minas Andhen—wherein, she says, lies the secret recipe of naurnen (Númenórean adhesive flame weaponry which the Corsairs of Umbar currently use with devastating force against Gondor.)

Lytta shivers at the mention of Minas Andhen, for the tower has become the stronghold for the Brotherhood of the Mountain Path, the mysterious tribe that mercilessly hunts down the surviving Oathbreakers of the White Mountains. Taking no chances, the party rides that evening with an escort of ten guards (all that can be found able to endure Skas' skeletal handshake). They quickly crush all resistance and begin to explore the tower, finding nothing of interest. The tunnels beneath the central courtyard, however, show many disquieting signs of the evil activities of the Brotherhood. Here they eventually discover the secret compartment and recipe for naurnen, and (to Rastarin's ill-concealed glee) whole chests filled with the main explosive ingredients.

Meanwhile, Clennan and Rassimus (who somehow contrive to spend most of their time exploring the wine cellar) discover a shrine and an idol of Shoglic, the name by which the ancient Oath-breakers worshipped the Dark Lord Sauron. What happened next has never been properly reconstructed, since no one will actually admit responsibility for knocking the statue over and smashing it up. Suffice it to say that he who breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path ofwisdom. At any rate, eyewitnesses later reported that a large number of wispy 'spirits' emerged from the shattered idol, and Clennan of Lossarnach was heard to remark "I have a bad feeling about this."

Ignorant of these events, the rest of the party are back in the courtyard preparing the horses for departure when suddenly their noses are assaulted by a horrible rotting smell, and the wind brings to their ears distant cries of "Brains! Braaains!" Climbing the guard tower above the main gates (which incidentally offer the only way out to the road, since Minas Andhen is surrounded by deep ravines) they behold an army of over a hundred undead warriors approaching. Lytta and Skas recognise their fellow Ruadh clansmen who have been slain by the Brotherhood and enslaved by Irusan, but Lytta does not have the power turn them. Things look bad. They close the gates and brace them, take a big swig of scrumpy, and wonder what to do next...

As usually happens after a few shots of scrumpy, Rastarin soon devises a cunning plan to deal with the army of bestial undead which is about to attack Minas Andhen.

"We can take all these explosive naurnen ingredients, spread them around the courtyard with hay from the stables, oil and other flammables, and when the zombies break down the gates we can shoot flaming arrows into it and blow them all sky high!"

"Your solutions all tend to a certain uniformity, don't they Rastarin?" Daeron comments dryly. But Skas and Lytta oppose any plan to destroy the bodies of their fellow clansmen, thus damning them to an eternity of disembodied hell.

"We should be trying to save them, not attack them," argues Lytta. "They are probably being controlled by someone or something within these walls. THAT is what we should be seeking to find and destroy."

A compromise is reached: the explosive material is prepared, the horses are shut in the tower, and Rastarin, Clennan and Rassimus volunteer to hold the gates while the others search the lower levels once more. Skas looks at Rastarin suspiciously before he departs, and warns her that the Brun, one of the more vengeful Oathbreaker clans, would be very upset if she were to blow up one hundred of their fellow clansmen unnecessarily.

"I promise, Skas," Rastarin replies earnestly, "that I will under no circumstances do such a thing until you...ah...until the last possible moment."

The three defenders soon have their hands full, for the dead, despite their slow movements, prove to be able climbers. The gates of Minas Andhen groan under the slowly building pressure of their rotting bodies, and after a while the timbers begin to crack. Meanwhile, the others discover more corpses roaming the dark passageways under the tower, and several skirmishes ensue between the dead and the soldiers from Morthond. Lytta observes that all the corpses have had their chests sewn up, and a desperate search eventually leads her to a hidden room where the hearts of the dead Ruadh lie in a steaming pit.

Lytta drops oil and a lighted torch upon them. "You are free," she says — but suddenly, heavy doors close behind her and Skas, and a very angry spirit assassin appears before them.

At that moment there is a loud crash as the gates of Minas Andhen shatter and close to a hundred bestial undead burst into the courtyard. Clennan and Rastarin pause at the parapet to light a lantern as the corpses shamble towards them with outstretched arms. "Brains! Brains! Braaaaains!"

"Alright, I've asked you nicely," says Rastarin. "And this is your final warning. GO AWAY! There, now nobody can say I didn't try to stop them."

"Just throw it!" Clennan pleads.

Meanwhile, down below, Lytta and Skas summon all their power to fight Irusan's spirit assassin, and to their surprise they are able to banish it within seconds; its energies must have been depleted from exerting control over all the dead Ruadh. The doors behind them burst open and Daeron enters. "The dead have stopped attacking!" he cries, and there are happy congratulations all round. But just at that moment, a deafening "BOOOM!" is heard from the courtyard above, followed by an ominous silence.

Skas, Lytta, and Daeron re-emerge into the smoky light of early dawn to the most disgusting stench they have ever encountered. Charred body parts are strewn everywhere, and the tower walls are splattered with gore. Clennan and Rastarin stand proudly in the middle of it all, congratulating themselves.

"You idiots!" fumes Skas, and explains that he and Lytta had already broken the curse. "Why must you solve every problem with violence? These actions will not be without consequence!"

Cowering before the fearsome sight of Skas enraged, Rastarin says, "Clennan did it."

"What the ?"

"He was the one who lit the lantern."

"Well, I wasn't the one who threw it!"

But Skas and Lytta are not mollified by their excuses, and it is not until Rastarin promises to stand trial before the Brun that Skas seems satisfied, and announces that he is returning to the Paths of the Dead for some rest and repairs. Despite Skas' help, Rastarin and Clennan are glad to see the last of him, since neither of them have any intention of keeping their promise...

Fine Print

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